



**¶ The pꛛeface.**

**¶ To the ryght woꝛthyfull Maſter Joſeph  
Ramſay, ſozde pꛛiour of Herton. Tho-  
mas Paynell, chanon of Her-  
ton ſendeth gretynges.**



**T**his lyttell and fruitefull booke,  
as you of your moſte gentyll  
nature, deſpyd me your obe-  
dient, I haue translated into  
englyſhe, I feare ſome wyll  
ſay, moche moze gladly than counnyngly,  
and that my wyll was farre moze redy than  
my wytte: But howe ſoo euer I haue done,  
if it may pleaſe your lordſhipp, I holde me  
well payde: for not only in this, but in all  
other thinges, my deſyre is, to do that, that  
may be acceptable to your good mynde: o-  
ther that be lerned, & lyke not my tras-  
lation, may ſette it forth in eng-  
lyſhe moze eloquently, and  
ſo do bothe great pro-  
fyte and pleaſure  
to many one.

**¶ Thus**  
god preſerue your lordſhipp  
in good helthe.

The compar. of a Vir. and Mar. 2

ERASMVS ROTERO. TO

the Venerable colledge of Vyrgins Ma-  
chabeticas at Colepne, sendeth gre-  
tynge in Christ Jesu, the sonne of  
a vyrgin, and Crowne  
of all vyrgyns.



OUR DEVOVT  
myndes good vir-  
gyns doo ofte ty-  
mes prouoke me,  
with youre dely-  
cate and swete pre-  
sentes, that I shoulde by somme  
maner of wrytynge, not onely ce-  
lebrate and laude your most pre-  
cious treasure, but also extolle  
and comende vnto you, your in-  
tent and purpose. In the tone ye  
be ledde by a certayne relygious  
desyre, sekynge nothyng els but  
the glozve of god, the whyche in  
his sayntis is very glorious: In  
All, the

The comparison of

In the tother I perceyue ye seke  
for spirituall gayne, with your  
pleasaunt and swete gyftes, dely-  
tyng the mowthe, diligently la-  
bouryng to opteyne of me those  
thynges, that fede the soule: this  
is a very deuout captation, a ho-  
ly desyre, a ryght wyse and gayn-  
full chaunge, and mooste comely  
and seemely for wyse virgins: yf  
I were the man that coude bring  
forthe any thyng oute of the se-  
crete coffers of holy Scripture,  
that might in like maner refreshe  
your myndes, as your giftes and  
presents do refreshe my bodye.  
You erre not in youre affeccyon,  
but you faylle in youre election:  
you loue that that is beste, but  
you chose not him, that can satis-  
fie your holy desyres. And yet bi-  
cause you shal not thynke me vt-  
terly



terly vnkynde, I do not a lpttell  
 reioyce, to see in you (chosen vir-  
 gins of god) this good mynde,  
 that is, thyrstynge nothyng els  
 but the glozy of your spouse. For  
 it is an euident and a sure token  
 of a chaste wyfe, to reckon her hus-  
 bandes glozy her owne. For tru-  
 ly he, vnto whom you are speec-  
 ally spoused, is aboue al the chil-  
 dzen of men the moste goodlyest,  
 and in all his actes and dedes he  
 is the moste glorious : Though  
 oone wolde contemplate and be-  
 holde on euey syde the wonder-  
 full frame of this world, yet shall  
 he fynde hym moze glouise in  
 the redemynge of the worlde, thā  
 in makynge therof. He made the  
 worlde, and the hole company of  
 aungelles with tournynge of an  
 hande : but with his pccyouse  
 A.iii. bloud

Gen. I.

The comparison of  
bloudde he redemed that that he  
made. The same wisdom, whi-  
che is Christe Iesus, and whiche  
also is the wonderfull workman  
of this worke, to thetēt to make  
a thyng more meruayllous, by  
dyuine crafte he edified a howse  
eternall, and a temple worthy for  
god, that is the Churche, whiche  
he as a kynge moste ryche, dydde  
freshly garnishe and orname with  
all maner of spiritual ornamen-  
tis. For what is golde, syluer, y-  
uory, what is the smaragde, the  
Topase, the beryll, or the varia-  
ble shynynge of precious stones,  
cōparring them to the rich giftis  
of the holye ghooſte, whiche are  
prophecy, the gyfte of tongues,  
the vertue of working myracles,  
and the curynge of infyrmities,  
peace, puritie, charitie, and suffe-  
rance

Dance? This holle Edifice, made  
 of lyuely stones, with a wonder=  
 full agrement couched together,  
 ryseth vp to heuen, Christ beinge  
 the very corner stone, knyttethe  
 fast to gyther al the hole frame, &  
 it can neither fall in ruyn nor de=  
 cay. These stones are the dyuers  
 orders of saynctis. In this Tem=  
 ple he retoyrceth to dwell, lyke as  
 he saythe in an other place: My  
 delectacyons are to be with the  
 sonnes of men. He this magny=  
 fycent Salomon gloxifieth hym  
 selfe in these ryches: he is noo  
 where moze meruaylious, noo  
 where moze glozious, than in his  
 saynctis: to whom he hath bou=  
 chesafed this honoure, to make  
 them his own membzes: and ac=  
 ceptynge them as his byetherne,  
 to make theym heires with hym

Ag. 4.

Pro. 3.

The comparison of  
of the heuenly kyngedome. He  
died for al: but yet his most glo-  
rye and pleasure is in the bendis  
of Martyrs, and in the compa-  
nyes of vyrgyns. These are the  
most precious Jewels, of which  
the churche of Chyriste dothe soo  
stately auauunce her selfe of, the  
whiche woteth nat wherof to glo-  
rye, but in the onely gyftes of her  
spouse. For what so euer thyng  
is glorious in saynctis, the same  
is the gyfte of Chyriste. O good  
virgins, the delectations and or-  
namentis of your spouse, are dy-  
uerse and variable. whā he goth  
forth, he is beset about with son-  
dye precious vertues, and with  
innumerable kyndes of flowers:  
but the rosis of martyrs, and ly-  
lyes of virgins, do mooste speci-  
ally please and delyte hym. And  
no

a Virgin and Martyr.

5

no meruayl, though he loue that  
that he is hym selfe, ye wherof he  
is the very fountayne to al other.

I am (sayth he) *Flos campi*, the flo-  
wer of the felde, and the lylle of  
the vales. He is the pynce of  
martyrs, for throughe hym mar-  
tyrs are myghty and stronge. He  
is the chiefe capitain of virgins,  
for by him virgins do subdue the  
fleshe, and the desyres thereof.

Cant. 2,

After that he descended downe to  
the erthe, and hadde spredde a-  
bode the fyre of charitie, wynter  
passed away, and these freshe flo-  
wers sprouted bp euery where in  
our countreye. Howe scarle was  
virginitie befoze? But after that  
Christe had ones consecrate vir-  
ginitie, howe many thousandes  
of yong men and women sprang  
bp sodaynly throughe out all the  
woylde,

The comparison of  
worlde, whiche wyllyngly gaue  
them selves to pure chastitie for  
the kyngdom of god? After that  
he, sufferinge dethe on the crosse,  
hadde taughte, that they were  
very happye, that wolde dye for  
goddys sake, howe many swar-  
mes of men & women came forth,  
that wyllyngely yea and gladly  
suffered deathe for the glozpe of  
Christe: Doubtlesse for this cause  
it is, that your spouse glozieth in  
the Cantycles, where he saythe  
thus, Ryse vp, haaste you my svete  
loue and my fayre dooue, and come. For  
nowe vvynter is paste, the shoure is  
goone, oure grounde is couered vvith  
freshe floures.

Howe barrayne shoulde our  
erth haue ben, if he the same he-  
uenly sonne had not kendled our  
hartis with y hete his Charytie?  
had

if he had not watred our mindes  
with the showre of his grace?

But what flourisheth fayrer then  
the Euangelicall beer? what is  
more plentyfulle? what is more  
louely? The rosis ruddy hewe a-  
bydeth not longe, the beautie of  
the lilye fadeth soone, wheron a  
certayne Pagane writeth thus:

Neither smallage is lyuely,

No, yet the shorte Lylie.

But those freshe flowers, with  
which the Churche is plentiful-  
ly furnyshed, do neuer wyther a-  
way. For Chyste is the immortall  
lylie, & gyueth immortall grace  
to his lylpes. He is the Rose im-  
mortall, whose freshe and fayre  
colour dothe neuer fade, and the  
same perpetuities he gyueth vnto  
his. He is called *Flos campi*, that is  
the flower of the felde, by cause of  
the

The comparifon of  
the Jewes. Fieldes be apte and  
mete for tillage. Amonge the Je-  
wes he was dyed with his owne  
precious bloude, the whiche Je-  
wes Moyses and other prophet-  
tes dydde care and tyme, yet they  
coude neuer cause them to bring  
forth fuche fruites as they looked  
for. He was the lylie of the Val-  
leys amonge the thorny and vn-  
tymed gentiles, to whom it is per-  
fwaded, that he became man, and  
was borne of the Virgin Marie  
without spotte of synne. Surely  
he was the euangelicall lylie, that  
god the father so clothed, as ne-  
uer Salomon was arrayed in al  
his great glory. For why, neither  
Salomon, nor yet none other,  
was euer borne of a pure virgin,  
defyled with no spotte of the fyrst  
parent. Xpo so euer couple them  
selfe



selfe by feyth to this lillie, bycause  
they are made one fleshe and one  
spirite with hym, they are pour=  
ged from fylthy synnes, they re=  
ceyue the sayre white garment of  
innocency, and be also made Ly=  
lles. For so in the same place fo=  
lowynge saythe the spowse, that  
nameth hym self a lillie: Lyke as  
the lylie is amonge thoznes, so is  
my loue amonge the doughters.  
what thyng els is the lily amōge  
thoznes? but a virgyne amonge  
wyues.

Cant. 2.

**M**atrymonye is an honeste  
thyng, but it is besette aboute  
with bziers and thoznes. For su=  
che as be married, saythe Paule, <sup>1. Cor. 7.</sup>  
shall haue trybulacyons of the  
fleshe. If any man doubte, whe=  
ther matrymonye haue thoznes,  
lette hym enquire of married wo=  
men

The comparison of  
men, what greates she en-  
dureth, that hath to her hul bāde  
a frowarde felowe, a drunkarde,  
a dyce, an aduouter, a waster,  
what dysplesures growe of kins-  
folke, and what of wycked chyl-  
dre, and than (if he thinke it best)  
lette hym denye a virgyn to be a  
lylie amonge thornes: A virgyn  
being free from the cares of this  
worlde, myndeth those thynges  
that pertyne to our lord, howe  
she maye please hym: She that  
is married, as it were hyther and  
thyther haled and plucked with  
dyuers and sondry cares, setteth  
her mynde on many thynges.  
Surely all they that haue taken  
on theym to folowe Christe, are  
lylies, but specially virgyns. A-  
monge them he the marueylous  
spouse fedeth and taketh his de-  
lyte,

lyte, whyche is not enterteyned  
 with euerý body. He is my Deere  
 Declýng and J his, which fedeth  
 amonge the lilies, vntyll the day  
 breake, and tyll the shadowes be  
 gone. Suche flowers he gathe-  
 reth, that he may make of them  
 a gatlande that neuer wythereth  
 away in heuen: lyke as it is said  
 in an nother place: My loue is  
 goone downe into his gardeyne,  
 vnto the swete smellingē beddes,  
 that he may refreshe him selfe in  
 the gardayns, and gather lilies.  
 Crewely of those lylies speaketh  
 the wyse man sayenge, Flozishē  
 you flowers as doth the lillie, and  
 gyue sweete sauour, and spredde  
 out your bowes in grace, singe a  
 songe of prayse, and blesse you  
 oure lordē in his workes. The  
 spouse beyngē a byrgyn, Declý-  
 teth

Cant. 2.

Cant. 5.

Eccl. 39.

Apoc. 14.

The comparison of  
teth in virgins songes. This is  
the newe songe, that the Syna-  
goge knewe not, in the which she  
was cursed, that brought forth  
no children. But there are in the  
gospell innumerable, that synge  
a newe songe, whiche were rede-  
med from the erthe, and called in  
to the felowshyp of aungels, by-  
cause that they neyther mary nor  
defyle theym selfe with women,  
but folowe the lambe, whither so  
euer he gothe, and are withoute  
spotte before the throne of god.  
There be many withoute spot in  
the syghte of men, but happy are  
they that appere suche before the  
throne of god: happye are they,  
which to the laude of theyr newe  
spouse, doo synge a newe songe,  
inwardly reioysyng, and to them  
selfe demeanyng great gladnes,  
that

a Virgyn and Martyr.

that they being pure and chaste,  
do singe pure and cleane balades  
in honour of their pure and clene  
spowse. And ofte tymes your  
quier to their spouse singeth this  
melodious songe:

**O** IESV the Crowne of byr-  
gins, whom she thy mother con-  
ceyued, whiche alone a virgyne  
dyd beare, accept o moſte mekeſt  
theſe our bowes.

**W**hat greatte purytie is in  
this virgin, he the prince of vir-  
gins, and spowse and crowne of  
virgins, was cōceyued of the he-  
uenly spirite, and borne of a byr-  
gin, the glozious beautie of byr-  
gynite not broken. Of wyues the  
hus bonde is the gloz, but of vir-  
gins Chryſte is the gloze: The  
whiche dothe fede among lilyes,  
compaſſed aboute with crownes

B

of

The comparison of  
of virgyns, hyghtynge and ad-  
ournynge his spowles with glo-  
rie, and yelornge to them rewar-  
des. Your spowse is a sheparde,  
whiche gaue his life for his shepe,  
and is yet styllle carefulle for his  
flocke. For daily he saueth them,  
dayly he calleth theym hoom a-  
geyne that straye abrode, dayely  
he cureth, and dayely he feedeth  
theym. He hathe also his delec-  
tations, in whiche he taketh ple-  
sure, he hathe his neere felowes,  
whome he calleth hus bandes, he  
hath his playfeeres yonge may-  
dens, whome he calleth wyues.  
In spiritual thynges there is no  
difference of sexes, but they are  
named and called after theyr age  
and merites. Christ hath but one  
spouse, whiche is the churche, she  
hath many to accompanye her, &  
euery

euery one of them maye be called a spouse. The spouse selfe is but one, and yet hath he somme, that he derely loueth, to whom he comytteth his wyues, soo that they also in maner may be called husbandes. For if byshoppes inowe rightously be called shepherdes, sythe there is but one shepeherde our lord Iesus, what shall than lette them to be called husbandes. The wyues of this worlde, are stately and proude of the gyftes and dignitie of their husbandes, they shewe and booste their gaye garmentes and freshe aray, for such as haue no husbandes seme as persones forsaken and destitute. But the spouse Iesus, for the despised ornamentes of this worlde, doth gaily hight and adourne his spouses with dowe-

The comparifon of  
ries of the fowle: for the glorie of  
the fleſhe, whiche ſo ſoone vany-  
ſheth away, he gyueth them im-  
mortall glorie. Trewely to thoſe  
ſpouſes, whiche folowynge the  
example of the high ſhepeherde,  
and lyke valyant champaigns in  
defence of his flocke, doo not re-  
fuſe to dye, he gyueth rewardes.  
What rewardes? not a garlande  
of oken leaues, or of laurell, not  
an image, or a title, or ſome other  
lyke reward, that the worlde  
for dedes worthily done is wont  
to gyue in recompence: but a gar-  
lande euermore freſhe and flou-  
ryſſhyng in heuen, and a name  
wryten in the booke of lyfe, that  
neuer ſhall be blotted out by noo  
age. This delicious and pleaſant  
ſpouſe, delyteth moſt ſpecially in  
this company, which for all that,  
lotheth



lotheth no wel disposed person, be  
he neuer so pooze.

**T**here foloweth in the forsaide  
hymne. Whither soo euer thou  
goest, virgins do folowe the, and  
with laudes syngynge runne styl  
after the, and with theyr sweete  
songes make pleasant noyse. Co-  
cernyng the fashon of the world  
it is an vncomely thinge, to see a  
virgyn wyllyngely rounne after  
her spouse. But it were a fowler  
syght, to see many virgins folow  
one spouse. In thingis touching  
the soule, it is otherwise, for there  
is nothynge more goodly, then to  
se many many virgins, that nere  
accompany one spouse Iesu. Noz  
it is noo meruayle, if they runne  
after hym, as they were woode,  
for loue of their spouse. For he al-  
lurethe theym to hym by secrete

The comparifon of

Pfal, 44.

intycementes, whose louelyneſſe paſſeth all humayne loue. He is the feyrefte among the children of men, flowynge full of grace are his lyppes, the whole byſage to beholde angels eſtyme moſt high felicytie. He breatheth with his ſwete ſmellyng ſauours on whom he wolie, and they on whome he breatheth ſay: Drawe me after the, and we ſhall renne in the odour of thy ſwete ſmelling oyntmentes. They can not renne, excepte they be drawen: they canne not loue, excepte they be fyrſte loued: And they that be alredy drawen, deſyre to be more plentifully drawen: they that rûne, couet to rûne ſo faſt, that they may approche yet more nere to hym that they loue. Trewely they felte and perceyued his lyppes to flowe  
fulle

Canr, 1.

full of grace, the whiche sape: **D** lozde whither shall we goo? thou haste the wordes of euerlastyng lyfe. Al they that pfeſſe the name of Chriſte, folowe they? Sheparde Ieſus: but they al onely his vnſeperable feres, do folowe whyther ſo euer he woll goo: they folow hym euen to the very beatynges, they folowe him euen to the very perſecution.

**O**ur lozde Ieſus, what tyme he was in this world, ofte tymes ledde after hym greate and huge multitudes of al ſortis of people: but whan he ſhulde go to Hieruſalem to be ſlayn, fewe dyd accompanye hym, but yet fewer, whan he bearynge his Crolle, went towarde the Mount of Caluerey. But they which be the very ſelows of the ſpouſe, whiche be true

The comparison of

virgins, coude not at this poynt  
be plucked frome theyr spowse.  
When he hynge vpon the crosse,  
Peter, whiche was thoughte to  
haue a wyfe, coude no where be  
founde, but the byrgyns, Mary  
the mother of Iesu and Iohn, a-  
bode faste by the crosse, the other  
women stooode afarre of, and be-  
helde what was doone. They fo-  
low then, ye and that gladly and  
wyllyngly: no: they folowe hym  
not as dumme persons, but syn-  
gynge balades, and makynge  
swete melody.

**T**hey that be mens wyues  
haue no leysure to be in the dan-  
ces, they haue no leysure, no ma-  
ny tymes they haue noo luste to  
synge: they muste please theyr  
husbandes, they must chide and  
bryaule with theyr maides and ser-  
uantes

uantes, & chastise they? children.  
Our virgins, being free from all  
care and thought of this worlde,  
do nothyng els, but in spiritual  
quiets, synge swete hymmes to  
they? spouse. For they ascribe no-  
thyng to them selfe, but gyue al  
the glozy of they? felicitie to him,  
to whom onely they owe al thyn-  
ges. He this louer deliteth in su-  
che maner songes, he wol, he wol  
his gyftes to be songe: he hateth  
the phariseis songis, I fast twise  
in the Saboth, I gyue the. x. of  
my goodes to the poze, I am not  
as other men be. The more chaste  
that a virgin is, the more shame-  
faste she is. Here the voyce of a  
very virgin: Beholde the hand-  
mayde of our lozde. And he hath  
sene the humilitie of his hande-  
mayde. In the cantycles he cal-  
leth

Luc. I.

B. v.

leth

The comparison of

leth his spouse a douue. He desireth to beholde her shappe, and  
Cant. 2. coueteth to here her voyce: Come  
sayth he, my douue out of the caues of the rockes, out of the holes of the walle: O lette me see thy vylage, and here thy voyce, for swete is thy voyce, and fayre is thy face. The soule hath his face. The face is moſte ſpecially eſtemed and iudged by the eies: With the eies we ſhewe & declare our intet: alſo with the eies with out voyce we ſignifie the inward affections of our myndes. The eie of a vyrgin is ſymple, ſhe enuyeth not, ſhe lyeth not in awayt to diſceyue, ſhe ſuſpectethe none yuell, ſhe myndeth not yll. The face of ſuche oone delytethe the  
Can. 2. ſpouſe, which a lyttell after ſayth thus: Howe fayre arte thou my loue,

loue, howe fayre art thou? Thou  
haste douues eies :

**H**ere some wyll saye, What  
swetenes is in the complaynyng  
and mourning voyce of a douue,  
to delyte and please a man with?

The nyghtyngales voyce shulde  
rather be called to this parable  
and similitude. The rare and ve-  
hemente loue maketh contynu-  
alle complayntes, but yet plea-  
sant and moſte acceptable to the  
ſpouſe. Here a lamentyng douue:

I deſyre to be lowſed, and to be  
with Chriſt. And ageyne: O wret-  
ched man that I am, who ſhall  
delyuer me from the body of this  
death? Harken what an other  
douue ſaythe, Wo is me, that I  
dwel ſo long in this world. And,  
By the waters of Babylon we  
ſate downe and wepte, whan we  
remem-

Phil. 1.  
Rom. 7.

Pſalm 119.  
Pſalm 136.

The comparison of  
remembred the Spou.

**T**hese lamentable voices and  
ful of sighynges, are most accep=  
table in the eares of the spouse,  
in such maner of songes he moch  
delyteth.

**A**nd bycause they sayd, O mer=  
cyfull loꝛde accepte our bowes, it  
is tyme, that they nowe expresse  
and declare, what they wold op=  
teyn of theyꝝ spouse: Is it riches=  
ses, is it honours, is it pleasures,  
is it a kynngdome, is it long lyfe?  
Foz those thinges care haue they  
none, foz y<sup>e</sup> behemēt loue of their  
spouse hath vtterly broughte the  
to despise those thinges. What is  
it than : we praye the, encrease  
our myndes yet moze largely, &  
graunt, that we moze vtterly be  
ignoꝛant of all corruption. They  
aknowlege howe great a tresure  
bit=



byrgynitie is, that is, A cleane mynde in a bodye vncozrupte. They also aknowlege, that what so euer he hath gyuen theym, he wol bouchsafe to encrease it, and to heape benefyte vpon benefyte. Noo byrgyn is soo pure, whiche hath not, wherby she may yet profite. For you shall scarcely find any virgin, whiche to thende the body maye be vndefyled, offendeth not otherwhile in thought. Noo trewe virginie resteth not only in the gyft of chastitie, but all vyce of the mynde is the cozruption of this virginie. Who soo euer swarueth from the true feyth catholyke, his virginie is defiled. Of this purenesse speaketh Paule, wrytynge to the Corinthians: I haue married you vnto one man, to byng a chaste virgin

The comparison of

g<sup>o</sup>ne vnto Christe: But I feare,  
lest as the serpente begiled Eue  
with his wylpynesse, euen so your  
wyttes shulde be corrupted from  
the simplenes, which is in Christ  
Iesu.

**T**A byrgin defyled with enuye,  
backbitynge, arrogancie, is wound-  
ed with corruption: Therfore  
they pray, that theyr most munifi-  
cent spouse woll vouchesafe to  
augment the gyftes that he hath  
gyuen theym, and that he wol-  
le graunte them to be vtterly ig-  
noraunt of all woundes of cor-  
ruption. why saye they vtterly:  
That is nother in mynde nor in  
body. what is to say of all: what  
soo euer the humayne affection  
doth moue and styre vs to. This  
bowe or request might seme vn-  
reasonable, ne were it that the  
spouse

spowse is almyghty, and mooste  
faythfull of his promyse. He wol  
not that his shal be only lyke un-  
to hym, but also he woll them to  
be the selfe same. But let vs ad-  
mytte, that no manne in this lyfe  
can attaine to that, that the quier  
of vyrgins dothe desyre, yet the  
request of this mooste thankefull  
quiere shall not be made in vayne.  
For that that they here throughe  
fauour of their spowse are mind-  
fulle of, shall in the resurrection  
chance them fully throughe theyr  
spouses augmentynge.

There are degrees in the Chur-  
che myltant, and soo there be in  
the churche triumphant. I wote  
not whether I haue tarped you  
longer than I shulde haue done  
in declarynge this hymne: Truly  
I repent me not, syth it is saynte  
Am-

The comparison of  
Ambroses . For besyde all other  
argumentis, the word of thre syl-  
lables in the ende of euery dime-  
ter, sheweth who is the authour.  
wherin I suppose that man had  
not so moche pleasure in the con-  
cent of the meter, as he delyted in  
the symbole of of the holpe Tri-  
nitie. The churche the spouse of  
Christe hath many hymnes, but  
I wote nat whether there be any  
that sing with moze ioy and glad-  
nes of al persons, than they, whi-  
che celebrare the spouse in the vi-  
ctoies of Martirs, or triumphes  
of virgins.

¶ But nowe to retourne againe  
to those two flowers, farre pas-  
synge all other most fragant, the  
Rose and the Lilie. Lyke as the  
deathe of Christe with his swete  
odour drew many to the contēpt  
and

and despyllynge of this lyfe: soo  
the virginitie of Chyrste allured  
many a one to the loue of chasti-  
tie. They that ar drawen of him,  
beinge nowe theym selues made  
flowers, haue drawen other.

Chyrste sayde to Peter: Folowe  
me. Howe manye haue folowed  
Peter: who denyeth, but that we  
be moche bounde to the holy doc-  
tours, the whiche (euery thyng  
beynge in peace and rest) haue  
taught vs the way of our lord:  
But how many mo hath the fra-  
graunt sweteness of the martyrs,  
drawen to the professyon of the  
gospel? Yea howe many mo the  
example of virgins? It is a gret  
thyng, boldly and connyngely  
to dispute of the gospelle: But  
the greattest poynte is, gladly to  
dye for the gospel. It is a great

Ioan. 21.

C

thyng

The comparison of  
thynges, to despise and set nought  
by the gloire and ryches of this  
worlde, but it is farre greater to  
mortifie and flee the fleshe with  
the concupiscencis thereof. And  
the church knoweth to whome  
she is bounde. The church (next  
Christ) hath had none in moze ho-  
nour, than they, which wyllyng-  
ly and gladly offred theyr bodies  
to be cruelly turmented, for the  
gloire of their spouse, and for sa-  
uation of the flocke, for the whi-  
che he hym selfe vouchsafed to  
dye. They secondarily were had  
in honour, whiche wyllyngly for  
the kyngdome of god gaue them  
selfe holly to lyue chaste. What a  
great ioye and gladnes was it to  
all the Church, whan a marty-  
r constantly suffred dethe for Chri-  
stis sake? And howe great sorow  
and

and lamentation, if any shanke  
backe. Agayne, Howe greattely  
dyd the church reioyce, if a vir-  
gin, that myght haue be married  
to a man, wold rather put on the  
holy baile of chastite, and couple  
her selfe to her spowse Chyste?  
And how great sorowe was there  
made, if any suche dydde caste of  
her bayle, and wolde be married  
to a man? Undoubted the losse of  
a thyng, that is most dere, is ve-  
ry greuous. With what seruente  
loue dydde chysten men in tyme  
paste runne to the ashes of Mar-  
tyrs? Howe holy was the memo-  
rie of them amonge all chysten  
men, whan dayly olde men, yong  
men, honest matrones, and vir-  
gins, runne thicke and threfolde  
to the pysones, as it were vnto  
places consecrate to god: whan  
C.ii. they

The comparison of  
they wold kys the cheynes, with  
whiche they were bounde: whan  
the swerde, with which they were  
martered, was reserued and kept  
amonge the holy relykes: What  
memorie is more ioyfull, & more  
hye and holy to the churche, than  
of Martyrs? Whan do menne  
syng with greater gladnesse,  
than in their yerely feastis? The  
whose afflictions and paynes the  
churche calleth vyctories, theyr  
turmentes triumphes, theyr dea-  
thes byrthes: nor in theyr cele-  
bratiōs is no maner mournyng,  
but all thynges full of ioye, fulle  
of gratulation, full of preyling,  
full of myrth and spozte. Nor the  
eloquence of excellent lerned mē  
hath ben more shewed or set forth  
in any argument, than in celebra-  
ting the laude and prayse of mar-  
tyrs



tyes and virgins. Herein Prudentius, in the kynd of verses called *Liricum carmen*, exceded the greate eloquēce of Pindarus, he passed the elegancy of Horace, not possible to be folowed. Herein the trumpe bothe of the grekes and latyns, soundeth out I wote not what farre greater and more diuine than verse heroical. In this argumente, Chrysostomus, Cyprianus, Ambrosius, Hieronymus, and many mo then can be nombred, excell Ciceros aboundaunt and flowynge style. What thynge maye we coniecte to be the cause? Truly the magnitude of the martyrs dyd minister abundance of eloquence, the feruētnes of theyr myndes added strengthe to theyr wordes, and deuotion alacritie. Of what matter so euer

C.iii.

they

The comparison of  
they wyte, they? style is plentiful  
and flowyng, But as oft as they  
take in hande to endyte of mar-  
tyrs and virgins, now as it were  
by diuine inspiration, they sowne  
out, I wote not what thing farre  
passyng mans capacitie. Those  
thynges are not doone by mans  
studye, but they are broughte to  
passe by inspiration of the holpe  
goste, the whiche woll his sayn-  
ctes to be so glozified, in the whi-  
che he desyrouslly gothe about to  
be seen most glozious. We wold  
graunt those thynges to be done  
by man, ne were it that god (whi-  
che inspireth the mindes of good  
men) doth ormate the monumen-  
tes of martyrs and virgins with  
so manifold myracles. For where  
are wycked spirytes more tour-  
mented? where are moo cured of  
gre-

greuous sycknesse and diseases  
 that no phisitions coude heale?  
 What emperour, what kynge is  
 he, with settinge vp of any ima=  
 ges, titles, steples, churches, col=  
 legis, commandyng diuine wor=  
 shippes, dyd opteyne so greatte  
 honour ye in this world? Doubt=  
 lesse thus god dothe honour his  
 martyrs, the whiche semed here  
 pooze abiectes and wretched cap=  
 tyues. Thus he honourethe his  
 byrgyns, the whiche beyng as  
 deed to the worlde, sette surely al  
 theyr holle hope in theyr spowse  
 Jesu. And they also aknowlege,  
 that what so euer they haue, co=  
 meth all of the lyberall gyfte of  
 theyr spowse. But the gloze of  
 martyrs doth not lyghtly glytter  
 and shyne but after the deathe:  
 where as virginitee euen in this

The comparison of  
lyfe is ful gay and glorioſous . For  
who is ſo barbarous, that wyl  
not fauour a virgin? In the very  
myddes of the ruſſelynge war-  
res the fierce and cruell enemy  
forbeareth virginitye . And if we  
beleue hystories, the dumme bea-  
ſtis, y<sup>e</sup> the hugest, the wyldest, &  
moſt cruell of them all, beare re-  
uerence vnto byrgynitye . Howe  
greatly dydde the Romaines in  
olde tyme honour the religioſous  
virgyns , called *virgines vestales* ?  
What a naturall woꝛſhpype and  
glorie of virginitye is that, whi-  
che ydolaters do acknowledge, whi-  
che the barbarous enemy dothe  
reuerence, which the dumme bea-  
ſtis doo perceyue, and to whiche  
the wylde beaſtis obeye? If ſoo  
great honour be done to the byr-  
gins of this woꝛlde, howe moche  
more

more honoꝛable is the virgin of  
Chꝛiste: O good byrgyne, take  
on the this holy pꝛide, and repute  
what so euer pleasures oꝛ honoꝛs  
this world braggeth of, to be far  
vnder thy dignitie. It is a holpe  
thyng to pꝛide in your spowse, &  
a deuout thyng to gloꝛie in him,  
to whome you owe all thynges.  
It is also a sure thyng, trusting  
faythfully in hym, to rise and re=  
belle agaynst the worlde, whiche  
braggyngly shewethe foꝛthe his  
delectable pleasures. My mynd  
is not at this tyme to write, what  
so euer may be sayde in the laude  
and pꝛaise of martiꝛs oꝛ virgins.  
You haue the booke of Cyprian,  
you haue the booke of Ambrose,  
of Tertullian and Hierome, of  
whiche the two last, were wel nere  
ouer moch in admiration of vir=  
ginitie.

The comparifon of  
ginitie. For the excellency of vir-  
ginitie wolde not soo be extolled,  
that the pꝛeſe therof ſhoulde be  
an iniurie to chaſte matrimonie.  
I recyte thoſe thinges moſte no-  
ble byꝛgins for this intente, that  
you maye perceiue howe happy  
and fortunate your College is,  
the whole chaunce is to poſſeſſe  
bothe thoſe thynges, whiche ſhe  
the rich ſpouſe of Chriſt the chur-  
che holdeth moſte ſpeciall in this  
worlde. For you haue in keepng  
thoſe moſte fragrant and ſwete  
roſes, of the. vii. brethern of the  
Machabees, and of theyꝛ mo-  
ther, yꝛ whole ſecunditie brought  
forth no childꝛen to her huſband  
but to god, ſhe fortunately redou-  
bed yꝛ loſſe of her virginie, with  
the martyꝛdome of ſo many ſon-  
nes byꝛgyns, She being a virgin  
brought

brought forth no frute, for y of al  
women was giue but to one, but  
yet she brought forth the bothe vir-  
gins and martirs. Of her self she  
coude gyue none example of vir-  
ginitie, but she perfourmed and  
dyd as moch as laye in her to do.  
She taughte her chyl dren to be  
virgins, she exhorted the to mar-  
tyr dome, and wolde haue suffred  
martyr dome befoze theym, saue  
that she feared their constancye,  
by reason of their tender youthe.  
And soo the glozie of vyrginitie  
chanced not to the mother alyke  
with the chyl dren, but touchyng  
the marty dome, the laude of the  
mother is soo moche the moze, in  
that she beholdyng the cruelle  
turmentes, suffred in eche of her  
lyttel chyl dren, what soo euer the  
cruell tourmentours coude do to  
the

The comparison of  
the bodie of them. This is more  
stronger, then by turmentynge at  
ones to be rydde from all peyne.  
For the parentes are more cruelly  
tourmented in the persecutynge  
of their chylderne than in theym  
selfe. And that knowethe ryghte  
well the wytty crueltie of tyran-  
tes, which wreste out by turmen-  
tyng of the chyldren in theyr pa-  
rentes sighte, that they coude by  
no maner of turmentes gette of  
the parentes. Howe oft sawe she  
beynge a woman and a mother,  
her owne fleshe and bowels toxe  
and rente to pieces: where was  
nowe the feble freiltie of þ kynde:  
where was the tender loue and  
pitie that is wont to be more be-  
hement in mothers then in men:  
Surely her deuout affection to  
godwarde, overcame al humain  
pitie,



pitie, and her feruent feythe ouer  
came the feblenes of womanhed.  
All hayle mooste happy virago,  
whiche haste gyuen example of  
fortitude to all menne. All hayle  
mooste fayre lyttell floures of the  
churche, whiche as type delyca-  
cies before your tyme, you haue  
preuented the spryng tyde of the  
gospell, and haue made a shewe  
of euangelycal vertue, before the  
gospell was shewed or knowen  
to the worlde. For as yet this  
voyce of hym, which being a vir-  
gin, is borne of a virgin, was not  
harde, Blessed be they, that haue Mat. 19.  
gyuen them selfe to lyue in cha-  
stite for the kyngedome of god,  
And yet the same prayse you by  
preuention haue opteyned afore  
hande. For this was not as yet Mat. 16.  
harde, who so wil be my disciple, Mar. 8.  
let

The comparifon of

lette hym take vp his crosse and folowe me, but you as foze runners, dydde adumbrate Chriftis passion. And nowe your sowles in heuen doo folowe the lambe, whither so euer he goeth: But as foze your vndefiled bodies (whiche were partners of your tourmentes and peynes, so in tyme to come you shall receyue theym to the felowshyp of euerlastyng felicitie) there was noo place moze comely noz moze conueniente to kepe them in, than in a holy college of virgins.

**N**owe to you good byrgens, that be the keepers of this so gret a treasure, my wordes do theym adresse. You haue in these yonge chylzen both an exa[m]ple of chastite, which you ought to folow, & a crowne of martyrdome, that you

you shoulde extelle, glozpfienge  
your spouse, which stroue in the,  
whiche in them gotte the victorie,  
whiche in them dothe triumphe.  
He hath in one self basket Lylies  
myngled with roses. The bygght  
beautie of the tone stryueth with  
the tother, noz yet the tone is not  
dusked oz defaced of the tother:  
but y tone by reason the tother is  
with him, doth y more gaily glit-  
ter and shyne, lyke as whan yuo-  
ry (as one sayd) is myngled with  
purpull, oz whan a shynnyng pre-  
cious stone is set in yelow gold.  
The stryfe is so doubtfull, whe-  
ther is more glorious a martir oz  
a virgin, that if the matter shuld  
be called in contention, I dare  
not boldly say, whiche of theym  
shoulde be preferred the tone be-  
foze the tother. Bothe the tone  
and

The comparison of  
and the tother are consecrate in  
Christ: but yet we ar moze boude  
to his crosse and passion, than to  
his virginite. He giueth to them  
the honozable title of blessednes,  
whiche for the kyngdome of god  
gyue them selfe to lyue in chastite:  
but yet he requirethe the folowynge  
of the crosse. It semeth a greater  
thyng, that whā he requireth it not,  
yet it maketh him blessed, that  
wyllyngly wyl perfourme it. And  
in the tyme of persecution it is a  
right gret thinge, for the glozpe of  
god to haue the mynde alwey  
prompte and redy to suffre all  
kyndes of deathes. But tymes haue  
like as the See hath, his tranquillities  
and quiete caumes. And other while  
one maye lesfully escape the persecu-  
ters handes. But if one be dy-  
uyn

uen to the last extremitie, the death of the body is the ende of greuous tourmentes, and the beginnyng of felicitie. A virgin hath a longe and a perpetuall stryfe with her housholde ennemie, the whiche she can neyther lausfullye flee, nor escape by flyghte. This housholde foe is the fleshe, the whiche whether we woll or woll not, we muste carie about, nowe and then rebellynge agaynst the spirite. And that it shal not seme easye to any man to subdue this ennemie, we haue redde of those that were ouercome with wanton entycementes of the fleshe, the whiche coude not be vanquished with the verye terrour and drede of deathe.

¶ Hitherto our collation hath pondered, whether of those two

D                      Shulde

The comparifon of  
Shulde be moze stronger : but me  
semeth that virginittie in this, is  
þ happier, that (as I by occasyon  
sayde afoze) the floure of martir-  
dome, doth not freshely sprede &  
floxishe, but after deathe : where  
as virginittie hathe her bryghte  
beautie, her sayre fragrancie, her  
grace and dignittie in this world.  
Virgynittie is the flower of the  
fowle and mynde, but in the by-  
sage, in the eyes, and in all the  
holle state of the body, there shyneth  
a certayne angelicall pure-  
nesse, and a flourysshynge clere-  
nesse, not acqweynted with olde  
age, here as it were myndynge &  
thynkynge to be, that all we loke  
foze after this lyfe, whyche lyue  
deuoutely and godly in Chryste  
Jesu. The mynde holle and vn-  
corrupte sparpleth abrode in the  
body

bodye her vigour and strengthe,  
lyke as the mynde infecte with  
vices sheweth in maner a glim-  
rynge lighte, oꝛ rather maketh a  
grisely shewe in the selfe shappe  
of the body. Foꝛ carnall pleasure  
is a fowle blemyshe to a mannes  
owne body. Why doo not the bo-  
dyes of good blessed menne ware  
olde in the resurrection? bycause  
nowe the soule shall rule theym,  
which woteth not what olde age  
meaneth. As deathe commeth of  
synne, so doth syckenes and age.  
Take synne away, and age shall  
seine the lesse: and if age chaunce  
to come, it shal chaunce moze flo-  
rishinge. And therfoze a virgyn  
recepuethe nowe in this worlde  
some parte of her felicitie, exhy-  
bytynge in this mortall bodye a  
certayne spece oꝛ fashon of the

D.it,

immoꝛ:

The comparison of  
Immortalitie to come. The p<sup>ri</sup>ncis  
of this worlde are noo moore  
careful fo<sup>r</sup> they<sup>r</sup> souldiours, than  
they be fo<sup>r</sup> the thyng that they  
come of, of the which whan nede  
requireth, they gather yong soul  
dyours, the whyche thyng if it  
shulde fayle, howe shoulde they  
furnyshe an armie? And nowe  
fo<sup>r</sup> a certayne yeres there hathe  
ben noo suche persecution vnder  
ch<sup>ri</sup>sten p<sup>ri</sup>ncis, as was v<sup>se</sup>d in  
tyme paste vnder Nero, Domi-  
tian, Julian, and Maxentius.  
But whether the Ch<sup>ri</sup>sten feythe  
be in better caase vnder these o<sup>r</sup>  
noo, it lyeth not in me to define,  
surely by them it was d<sup>ra</sup>wen in-  
to a narrowe poynt. But how so  
euer it be, if there shulde ageyne  
chaunce persecution, the whyche  
wolde require a marty<sup>r</sup>, where is  
it



it moze lykely that such a cōpany  
 shulde be gathered, than of them  
 the whiche despisyng al the fals  
 flatering vanities of this world,  
 haue cōsecrate theym selves holly  
 to Jesu the celestiall spouse, the  
 which wyllyngly haue crucified  
 their fleshe to gether with the vi-  
 cis and concupiscencis thereof,  
 and for the loue of theyr spouse,  
 haue contempned and sette atte  
 noughte that same pleasure, for  
 the fauour of whiche only many  
 mortall menne desiren euermoze  
 here to lyue. A true virgyn doth  
 differre very lyttell from a mar-  
 tyr. A martir suffreth the executi-  
 oner to mangle his fleshe: a vir-  
 gin dayly dothe with good wyl  
 mortifie her fleshe, she beinge in  
 maner a turmentour of her selfe.  
 It is somewhat moze maystry to

D.iii.

tame

The comparifon of  
tame an ennemye taken, than to  
kyl him. A marty? deliuereth his  
body to be persecuted: A virgin  
kepeth her body in lowe fubiec-  
tion, and maketh it obedient vn-  
to the fpirite. wherfoze Shall the  
virgin of Chrift treble and feare  
the handlyng of the executioner?  
Shall ſhe require rycheſſes, de-  
lycacies, worldly pompe, world-  
ly welthe, or worldly pleasures,  
whiche cauſen other to be verpe  
lothe to leaue this lyfe? All theſe  
thinges ſhe hath now cleane for-  
faken. Shall nat ſhe, whiche lo-  
ueth nothing in this world, whi-  
che is deed to the worlde, whose  
lyfe is onely Chriſte, which day-  
ly maketh her turtys mournyn-  
ges, couetyng to be nerer ioy-  
ned to her dere beloued ſpouſe, &  
to be embraced & clypped of hym,  
wyl

wil she not (I say) gladly dect out  
of this wretched body, in the whi  
che she woteth wel she trauapleth  
as a pilgrim farre from her lord?  
what men haue suffered the tour-  
mentes of martyrdome moze mer-  
uailously and strongly than vir-  
gine Martyrs, Agnes, Cecilia,  
Agatha, and other theyr felowes  
innumerable. And therfore whā  
a virgin is deliuered to the exe-  
cutioner, she dothe not begynne  
her martyrdome, but makethe  
an ende of that that she beganne  
longe before. If those thynges  
seeme to any manne ouer harde  
hyghe and difficile, lette hym re-  
membze, that the professyon of  
a virgin is aboue the powers of  
man, and egall with the dignite  
of angels. But al they that weare  
blacke bayles, are not virgins.

D.iiii.

For

The comparison of

For lyke as they ( accordynge to  
1. Timo. 5. Saynte Paules doctryne) whiche  
are true wydowes in dede, be di-  
scerned frome those, whiche by a  
wzonge name are called wydo-  
wes: and as that widowe, whych  
lyueth in delytes of this worlde,  
is sayde to be deade: ryght so a  
virgin, whiche loueth any other  
thyng in this worlde thanne her  
spouse, is not a virgin. There at  
Mar. 25. in the gospel wyse byrgins, whi-  
che by manifolde workes of mer-  
cy and pitie, haue so prouided for  
them selfe, that oyle in theyr lā-  
pes shall not fayle: there are in  
like maner folysshe virgins. And  
Tren. I. Hieremie bewayleth such vnwise  
virgins: for the dignitie of this  
name is nothing mete and agre-  
able for her, the which although  
her body hath not ben touched of  
man,

man, yet her mynde hath ben defiled and spotted with filthy and vncleane thoughtes. She that lyueth syngle agaynste her wyll, is married: and she that wolde be corrupted, if she might lefully, is alreedy corrupted. It is a thinge of greattest difficultie, to repressse and kepe downe all cogitations and inwarde thynkynge of a wauering mynd: and yet ageinst them assaylynge, there muste be defence made with prayers, redyng of holy booke, fastynge, deuoute and godly occupations: for why to assent to them is very payson. Eua the fyrste virgin, dyd commune and talke with the serpente, and therof sprange all puel: her eies were not chaste, the which the wanton intycement of the flatterynge apple dyd adulterate

The comparifon of  
rate and defyle. The gaye costly  
apparaylle, the peynted face, the  
pleasant and mery enditynges of  
yonge men, the propre knackes  
and gyftes sente to and fro, are  
playne tokens and fignes that  
virginitie dieth. For whole plea-  
sure doth a virgin ones dedicate  
to Chrift, or nate and trimme her  
felfe? Why dothe ſhe coueyte the  
companye of yonge men, the whi-  
che toke on her the beyle of rely-  
gion bycauſe the worlde ſhoulde  
not ſe and beholde that that was  
conſecrate to the ſpouſe Chriſte.  
A woman that is married, dothe  
decke & trimme her ſelfe to pleaſe  
her huſbādes eyes: but why ſhuld  
a virgin that is married to Chriſt  
make her ſelfe gorgeous and gay  
for any erthely mans pleaſure?  
Marke what ſhe ſhuld ſay by the  
mouth

**mouth of a lerned poete, but a  
pagane,**

For whom Shuld I make me sayze a gay,  
Or whom to please, do my diligence  
Whan of hym, that of my freshe array  
The onely cause is, I haue the absence.

**If she so did neglect to make her  
fresh, bicause her hus bād was ab  
sent: how dare a virgin make her  
self friske & gaitard i this world,  
the whole spouse is in heuen? To  
what intent doth she that is ones  
betrouthed to Chyste, stande lo-  
kyng in a glasse? Yea she shuld  
contemplate and behold her selfe  
in the clere fountayn of holy scri-  
pture. Why dothe she arraye hir  
self in those garmētes, with whi-  
che he is offended? This clenly-  
nesse in the eies of your spouse  
ar very dirty spottis, this bright  
beautie but sluttyshe beggerye,  
these swete saours but stinking  
smelles.**

The comparifon of  
smelles. He loueth a pure fpirite,  
a clene foule, and a well peynted  
mynde. What fo euer the worlde  
hath, it is theirs, that make them  
felte gorgeous and gaye for the  
worlde: the virgin of Chriſte is  
more richely arrayed with deſpi-  
ſynge of thoſe thynges, thanne  
with the aboundance of them.  
She is more comely apparayled  
with her heares clypped of, & her  
holp beyle, than any bryde trim-  
med in ſylkes, gold, precious ſto-  
nes, and purpull. For the diſſem-  
bled beautie, ſet out with feyned  
colours, hath euer ben diſallowed  
of the Gentyles. The ſpouſe of  
Chriſte hath as many freſhe gar-  
mentes, that make her gay in the  
ſyght of god, as ſhe for her ſpou-  
ſes ſake deſpyled oznamentes of  
this worlde, for precious ſtones  
ſhe



She is ornated and decked with vertues, in stede of pourpull she hath charitie, for gold, wysdome, for feyned colours symplenes of mynde, for sylkes chastitie and shamefastenes: for broches and iewels, sobrenes and temperance in al her wordes and dedes. The fayre beautie of chastitie can not be defyled with sluttyshe garmentes.

**I**t dothe appere by olde monumentes and wytynges, howe high and howe laudable a preise it was for virgins, to washe the feete of myserable creatures, to washe pooze folkes clothes, to attende vpon sycke folke and serue theym lowely, and for the loue of Christ to handel and touch theyr bodyes, ful of sores and botches. A virgin stubbred & soylled with those

The comparison of  
those thynges, is most fayre and  
beautyfull in the syght of Christ.  
But for so moche as the institu-  
tion of holy and deuout virgins,  
is now otherwise, let them stryue  
amonge theyn selves in the offy-  
ces and woꝝkes of charitie, and  
pzeare with theyr handes, wher  
with they may helpe and succour  
the poze and neddy. And if it hap-  
pe a virgin at some tyme to haue  
cōmunication with secular per-  
sons, let this be her studie, that  
they maye go awaye from her a-  
mended by her talkynge, and she  
her selfe nothyng appayzed. Let  
the example of the fyrste virgine  
make you moze wary and fly, the  
which beinge corrupted by spea-  
kyng with the serpente, threwe  
her selfe into lamentable mysery.  
A yonge manne with his sylpper  
cōm-

countenaunce, with his wanton  
eyes, and with his rebaud tonge,  
is woꝛs thā any serpent. Se that  
you folowe the newe virgin, lea-  
der and pꝛincesse of your institu-  
tion, she talketh not with the ser-  
pent, but being close shutte with-  
in her secrete chaumbꝛes, talketh  
with the angelle, and therof be-  
gan all our helthe. A virgin that  
talketh with an vnchaste yonge  
man, speaketh with a serpente. A  
virgin whiche with deuoute bo-  
wes and prayers callethe vppon  
god, which hath her meditation  
in holy bokes, speaketh with the  
angell, oꝛ rather with her spouse.  
Whether of these two is mooste  
sure? whether is moꝛe honeste?  
whether is moꝛe magnificent?  
Wherfoꝛe if at any tyme the de-  
sire of those thynges, the whiche  
as

The comparifon of  
as right fweete & noble the world  
braggynge bosteth, shall tikyl  
your myndes : cal to remembꝛance  
as the trouthe is, that you haue  
not forgoꝛne those thiges, but to  
your great lucre to haue made a  
chaunge . And therfoꝛe there is  
nothyng moꝛe vnfoꝛtunate than  
those, which letted by carnall lu-  
stis, can neyther vse the commo-  
dities of this worlde, which they  
mooste desyre, noꝛ yet theyꝛ owne  
pleasures. The worldly virgins  
haue theyꝛ playe felowes , they  
haue theyꝛ ornamētes, theyꝛ spoꝛ-  
tes and pastymes, theyꝛ songes  
and theyꝛ daunces, but these thin-  
ges such as they be, they haue no  
longer than theyꝛ freshe flourys-  
shynge and tender yowthe endu-  
reth. But as al these thinges are  
to the virgins of Chꝛyste trewe  
and

and inwarde pleasures, soo they  
 be euerlastyng. These worldely  
 virgyns settyng a syde the gar-  
 lande of virginite, do take and  
 put vppon theym the mantell of  
 mariage, without dout (as saynt  
 Paule saythe) a playne token of  
 bondage and thraldome. But vir-  
 gins dedicate to god, be alwaye  
 kepte close for theyr spouse, lesse  
 the worlde an aduoutreer shuld se  
 theym. For Iesus is a ielous lo-  
 uer, he can not suffre to haue his  
 dere derlynges sette and shewed  
 forth to the spght of the worlde.  
 But whether is it more plesante  
 and more welthy to be the hande  
 mayde of a married manne, or the  
 hande mayde of Chyriste? Ecce in-  
 quit, ancilla domini, Beholde (sayth  
 she) the hand mayde of our lord.  
 Who so euer is truely the hande  
 mayde

LUC. I.

The compa rison of  
mayde of our lozde, is lady of the  
world. ¶ good birgin, interpre-  
tate what thyng thy beyle betoke  
neth, it is the sygne of a kynge-  
dome, and not of bondage. They  
that are beyled and couered for  
theyr husbandes pleasures, doo  
professe a worldly bondage. For  
the commaundement of maryed  
men, good birgins, is not alway  
lyghte and easye. Often tymes  
where you wende to haue hadde  
husbandes, you chaunce vppon  
maisters harde to please, vppon  
suche as are froward and neuer  
contented, vpon such as be curst  
and knauishe, vpon dycers, dru-  
kerdes, riotttous spenders, vpo  
suche as be greatly indetted, vpo  
suche as be scabbed and scuruy,  
vppon frantypcke felowes, and  
vppon fyghters, besydes many  
other

other moze greuous and wycked  
condicions oꝝ diseases, whiche I  
speake not of . Moze ouer there  
foloweth care of the householde,  
care of childzen, busynes of kyns-  
folke and frendes , stryfe in the  
worlde, lacke of childzen, bury-  
enge of husbandes. For why the  
affliction of the fleshe is of noo  
symple soꝛte, the whiche sayncte  
Paule signifieth vnto them, that  
woll rather chole wedlocke than  
virginitie. My pourpouse is not  
nowe by reason of this declama-  
tiō to discriue, what so euer grefe  
oꝝ incommoditie foloweth mari-  
age. And yet to lerne them by ex-  
perience is but a wretched wyse-  
dome : better it were to come by  
the knowlege of them by redyng  
the bookes of lerned men. But in  
case you woll not gyue credence

The comparifon of  
to lerned mens wrytyngeſ, than  
call but oyou good virgyne one  
of them, the whole chaunce was  
to be verpe welle and welthylpe  
maryed, and deſyre her, that ſhe  
woll vouchefafe to telle and de-  
clare to you the true ſtoꝝ of her  
mariage: you ſhal here ſuche re-  
kenyngeſ, that you ſhal nothing  
repent you of your pourpoſe.  
Nowe lay befoze your eies, the ex-  
aumples of byrgingſ, the whole  
chaunce was mooste vnluckely  
and vnwelthily to be beſtowed &  
maried, of which there is a huge  
great company: and thynk thus,  
that what ſoo euer chaunced to  
them, might chance to you. What  
ſo euer puelles, what ſo euer ca-  
lamities and myſeries chance to  
them, that be maried to a moꝝtal  
man, can in no wiſe hurt oꝝ greue  
thoſe,



those, the whiche cruelly, the whiche with harte and mynde mary them selfe to the immortal spouse Iesu. Beleue me, your spouse Iesus is in nothyng sorrowfulle or heuy, but in al thynges pleasant and louely. He semed some tyme to haue neyther fayre shape nor goodly beaute, but he was neuer more louely, than whan for the loue of his spouse he dyd vppon hym that same shape and forme. What mayde is she, that wolde not make farre moch more of her wower, if he being a noble mans sonne, wolde forsake his fathers ryches & trefure, & clothed with a homely husbandes wiede, wolde runne to her cotage, being a poore mayde to the intent to opteyn her to his wyfe? But what yf he refuse not to be greuously wounded

E.lli. in

The comparifon of  
in haſtynge hym to come to his  
entierly beloued ſpouſe? Shuld  
not he, ſo poozely clothed and all  
bloudy with his woundes, ſeme  
moze louely? whithout doubt he  
ſhulde ſo ſeme to her that loueth  
hym. Nowe thanne thynke with  
your ſelfes, whether your ſpouſe  
ſhulde with a ſtately countenāce  
be of you diſdayned, whiche for  
your ſake leſte his fathers moſte  
royall palaice, deſcended downe  
into this world, and cloking and  
hydyng the maieſtie of his dy-  
uine nature, toke vppon hym  
the ſhappe and fourme of a ſer-  
uant, humblyng hym ſelfe to the  
verye igmony and ſhame of the  
croſſe. A monaſterie to a virgin  
that louethe her ſpouſe, is not a  
priſon (as ſome ſklaunderouſly  
do ſaye) but it is a paradyſe. It  
is

Phil. i.

is not lefull for you to wāder and walke aboute whither your luste leadeth you : perdye this thyng for virgyns is neyther surenoz honeste, and therfore you shulde not desyre it. Excepte peraduenture the example of Dina please the you. Virgynitie is neyther sorowfulle nor heuy, but a pleasant thyng. Virgynitie hath her fayre orchardes to walke in holye Scrypture, in the whiche she may spozte and play amonge that mooste goodlye compayne of her spowse. O good lord with what maner compayne : With Tecla, with Cecilia, with Agatha, with Theodoza, with Eustochio, and other innumerable. Also virginities hath her spiritual garlādes, made and wrought with freshe flowers of dyuers

The comparison of  
vertues: she hath her swete pomaunders and saouours, soo that virgins maye say with Sayncte Paule, *Bonus odor sumus deo in omni loco*, That is to saye, We be a good sauoure vnto god in euery place. Also the spowse hathe his delicate and swete spirituall pomaunders, of whiche the fragrant swetenesse excellethe all aromaticke saouours. Whatte is more amiable than the name of Iesus? His name is a sweete smellynge saour, that is sparpled abrode. The virgins being drawn with that sauoure, to folowe hym as faste as they can runne, what tediousnesse canne they haue oz fele in this lyfe?

**A** virgin also hath her swete pommaunder, wherwith in lyke maner she pleaseth her spowse.

Dum

*Dum esset, inquit, rex in accubitu suo, nardus mea dedit odorem suum,* **That is**  
**to saye,** when the kyng satte at  
his table, he smelled my sweete  
nardus. And in the gospel when  
that Chyriste shulde be maryed to  
his spowse the Churche, the wo-  
man synner powred sweete smel-  
lynge oyntmentes vpon hym.

Mar. 14.

Maryngs haue they? harpes of  
Dauid, they haue the Psalter,  
they haue they? songes and spi-  
rytuall hymnes, with whyche in  
they? hartis they synge contynu-  
allye to god, gyuyng thanks,  
lawdyng and besechyng, and  
sommetyme with dulce and softe  
syghinges desyringe the ptesence  
of they? spowse, if he at any tyme  
absent hym selfe for a season: for  
otherwhyle he declineth and pas-  
seth forth by, not to the intent he

E. v.

woll

The comparifon of  
woll leaue them, but to redinte-  
grate and renewe his loue with  
theym. What thyng haue thefe  
worldely virgins, be they neuer  
fo fortunate, that may be compa-  
red to thefe folaces and plesures?  
The place canne not feme ftrayt  
and narrow to theym, to whom  
within a fhorthe fpace after the vn-  
meafurablenes of heuen is ope-  
ned: nor they canne not thynke  
theym felfe to be fklenderlye ac-  
compained, to whom within a ly-  
tel whyle fhall chance, to be in the  
felowfhyppe and company of all  
fayntes. Why fhulde I not fay  
within a lyttell whyle? For howe  
longe I pray you, is all the holle  
tyme of this prefent lyfe? in cafe  
it happen a man to lyue tyl he be  
very olde: whiche thyng to how  
many dothe it chaunce? Where-  
foze

foze good virgynes, aknowlege  
your felicitie and welth, and loke  
that you haue no spite noꝝ enuie,  
that the world hath his iugglyn-  
ges of bayne delytes and plesu-  
res, aknowlege your dignite, and  
looke not you foꝝ the sluttyshe  
and fylthye marchandysse of the  
worlde. He sayth, *Nisi te cognoueris*  
*pulcherrima inter fœminas*, I mooste  
feyrest amonge womenne, but if  
thou knowe thy selfe. The spouse  
thꝛetteneth his virgins, onelesse  
they wyll aknowlege theyꝝ bles-  
sednes. But they aknowledge it  
not, which repent, that they haue  
bounde them selves to liue a holy  
chaste lyfe, noꝝ they whiche gape  
and loke after worldly vanities  
and pleasures. Calle vnto youre  
remembraunce, to whome you be  
spowled, and loue and stycke to  
hym

Cant. x.

The comparifon of  
hym with al your very hartes, in  
whom ones you haue al thynges  
the whiche are ioyfull and mag-  
nifycent. Let the example of the  
mooste holy yonge men animate  
and courage you to be constant,  
the which shall a great deale the  
more reioyce & be glad, that their  
bodies as pledges be reſerued &  
kept in your Colledge, yf they  
mowe perceyue, that you be folo-  
wers of thoſe theyr vertues, with  
the which they pleaſed god. They  
ornate and garnyſhe your religi-  
ous company: ſoo in lyke maner  
ſe that you with integritie of lyfe  
and moſte pure and honeſte con-  
uerſations hight them agayne.  
They chaſe rather to ſuffer ma-  
ny and dyuers kyndes of tour-  
mentes and peynes, thenne they  
wolde ones taaste hoggis fleſhe.

Lobe



Loke that you repute & thynke it  
to be hoggis fleshe, what so euer  
is displeasāt to your spouse. If you  
wyl be emulators and folowers  
of this most goodly conflict, you  
shall be part takers of theyr glo-  
ry, by the helpe of your spouse

Christ Iesu, whiche with  
the father and the holy  
gooste lyueth and  
reygneth eter-  
nally.

A M E N.

**T**hus endeth the com-  
paration of a byr-  
gyne and a  
Martyr.

LONDINI IN AEDI-  
BUS THOMAE BER-  
THELETI RE-  
GII IMPRES-  
SORIS.  
CVM PRIVILEGIO.

Erasmus, D.